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THE CHVRCHES PVRITY;

OR,

THE DIFFERENCE BETVVEENE THE CHVRCHES FRAME IN DARKE TIMES; AND her ſettlement in the pureſt times.

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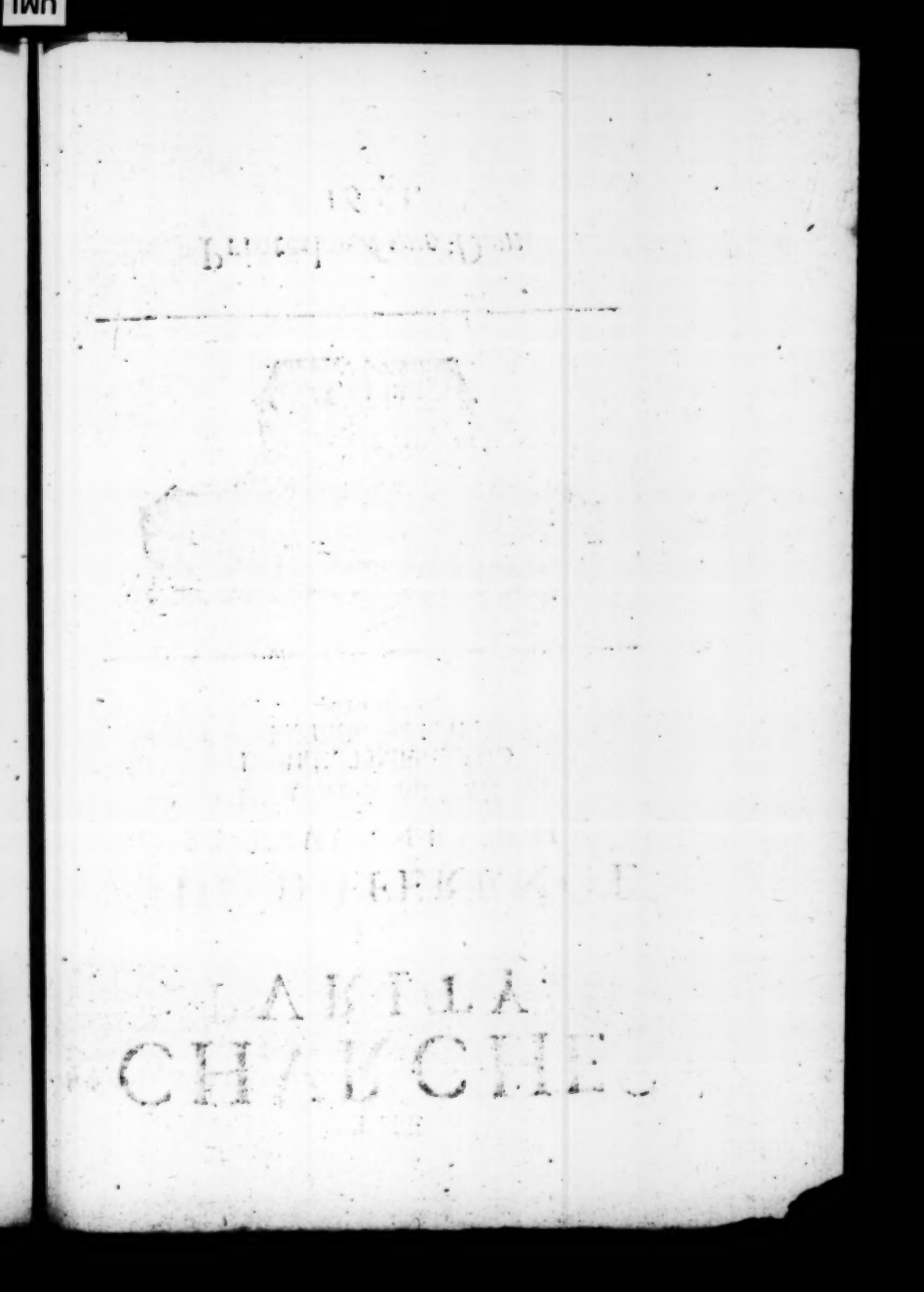

TO

THE HIGH, AND MIGHTY, AND OVR ROYALL KING CHARLES;

By the Grace of God King of *England, Scotland, France,* and *Ireland,* &c. The Lord grant, to his Honours increaſe, to his dayes length, and to his Royall Perſon and poſterity (both here and hereafter) Eternall Glory. *Amen.*

Moſt Royall Soveraigne,

I Doe not preſume to ſore ſo high; in Reſpect of the worth of my labours above others; for had they beene penned by a farre more exquiſite Author, yet might a much inferior patronage (notwithſtanding) have beene a worthy favour: I am I doe confeſſe altogether unworthy

under such a patronage to purchase favour to a popular eye: how then shall I crave favour of your Sacred Majestie to deeme a gracious eye upon me. To prostrate these before your Highnesse, as a present, they proceede from too inferior an Author; Or as counsells, it were too great presumption. Yet your gratious, meeke, and pious Soveraignty emboldeneth me to devote the fruit of my meane labours to your Princely eys, because (though weake, yet) faithfull, which though it cannot bee good enough to deserve that gratious countenance of my Royall Soveraigne, yet this I can protest, that my heart, my tongue, my hand and penne, shall be alwaies, upon all opportunities (next under God) devoted to my Royall King, and Gracious Soveraigne.

And be glad as I am able

(though unworthie)

to extoll

Your Highnesse worthy praise.

H. Walker.

THE CHVRCHES PVRITY: Or, the difference betweene the Churches frame in darke times, and her ſettlement in the pureſt times.

It is a falſe ſaying to conclude, that a thing which was once well done, muſt in no wiſe bee altered; for when the cauſe of the time is changed, good reaſon doth require the well done thing to be reformed alſo, ſaith Saint Auguſtine *in his 5. Epiſtle to* Marcellinus.

Though the frame of the Church of England, *as it was ſetled at the reformation of Popery, was approved by good men; yet (nevertheleſſe) in theſe more pure times, it may and ought to bee reformed in many particulars.*

1. *Argument.*

THat Church, whoſe frame doth differ from the Doctrine of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt in any particular, may and ought in ſuch particulars, to be reformed. But the frame of the Church of England, as it now ſtands, doth differ from the Doctrine of the Goſpel of 1. *Argument.*

of Jesus Christ in many particulars: Therefore the frame of the Church of *England*, as it now stands, may and ought to be reformed in many particulars.

2. *Argument.*

2. *Argument.* THough a Church be Reformed from Idolatry, and setled in the purest forme, which then can bee attained unto, yet nevertheless; time producing by better experience, many inconveniences, wherein it may be againe reformed; and that upon good grounds, such inconveniences may, and ought to bee reformed. But the Church of *England*, though it be reformed from Popery and Idolatry; and setled according to the purest forme; which at her reformation it could attaine unto; yet (nevertheless) since such her settlement, time hath produced by experience, many inconveniences wherein it may and ought to be againe Reformed; and that upon good grounds; Therfore the Church of *England* may, and ought to be Reformed in all such things.

Conclusion

Concerning the 1. *Argument.*

I. To proove that that Church whose frame doth differ from the doctrine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in any particular, may and ought in such particulars to bee reformed. Therefore saith Saint *Cyprian*, wee ought not to take heede (saith he) what any man hath thought good to be done before us, but what Christ which was before all men, hath done before that; for we must not follow the custome of men, but the truth of God. And Saint *Paul* tells us, that those things (saith he to the Church at *Philippi*) which yee have both learned and received, and heard, and seene in me; those things doe, and the God of peace shall be with you, *Phil.* 4. 8, 9. Whereby wee may plainely see, that if any Church shall entertaine any thing

In his Ep. unto Cecilius l. 2. Epist. 3.

thing that is contrary to the doctrine of the Gospel of Iesus Christ: such things upon tryall being found to bee so, ought to bee reformed.

II. To prove that the frame of the Church of England, as it is now, doth differ from the Gospel of Iesus Christ in many particulars, which to reckon up in this place I am not resolved, I will onely propound five *Queries* and referre them to the judgement of those who please to search the Scriptures there underquoted.

5. *Queries.*

I. Whether the Lordly government of the Bishops in the Church of England, and their being, as they now stand, doe not differ from the Gospell of Iesus Christ. *Luke* 22. 25, 26. 1. *Pet.* 5. 1, 2, 3. *Matt.* 20. 25, 26. *Marke* 9. 32. 2. *Tim.* 4. 2. *Tit.* 1. 5, 6, 9. 1. *Tim.* 3. 1, 2 3. 2. *Tim.* 1. 2.

II. Whether Excommunication be used in the Church of *England* upon such persons, and according to the true manner of the discipline of the Gospel of Iesus Christ. 2. *Cor.* 16. 22. 1. *Cor.* 5. 5.

III. Whether the service in the Church of *England* bee according to the Gospell of Iesus Christ. 1. *Cor.* 14. 6. *Acts* 13. 15, 16. 1. *Cor.* 14. 26. *Acts* 1. 13. *Mat.* 5.

IV. Whether those unpreaching and ill-living Ministers, which are placed to serve many Churches, be according to the Gospell of Iesus Christ. *Mat.* 5. 15. *Luke* 10. 2. *Mat.* 10. 27. *Luke* 12. 42. *Mat.* 28. 9. *Acts* 10. 28. *John* 10. 13. *Rom.* 10. 14. 1. *Cor.* 9. 14. *Phil.* 2. 21. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2.

V. Whether those superstitious Ceremonies of Crossing in Baptisme, bowings, and cringings in the Churches of *England*, and other such like Ceremonies, be according to the Doctrine of the Gospel of Iesus Christ,

Mat. 15. 3. *Marke* 7. 8. *Acts* 15. 10. *Coloss.* 2. 8. *Tit.* 1. 13, 14. 1 *Pet.* 4. 11. But because I am verily perswaded that there is no man of any discretion or judgement, but will confesse each particular in the first argument to be true; I am therefore briefe in it, and passe to prove the second.

Concerning the 2. Argument.

I. To prove that though a Church bee reformed from Idolatry; and setled in the purest forme, which then can be attained unto, yet nevertheless time producing by better experience many inconveniences, wherein it may be againe reformed; and that upon good grounds: such inconveniences may and ought to bee reformed. What though our fathers, and our grandfathers, &c. lived well under such a forme of Church discipline, as wee now enjoy; and blessed be the Lord that wee doe still enjoy it: and are kept from the Idolatry under which not many predecessors before us were afflicted, yet I say notwithstanding, blame not them who cry for the reformation of the Church of *England*. They thought themselves happy under this forme, so doe wee; But what if they saw not those things which we now see; what if the Lord revealed not so much light to them, as he is pleased (in these dayes) to reveale to us, or what if they did labour as much as they could for reformation of such things as wee now doe, and could not effect it; or what soever the cause was, I intend not at this time to dispute.

They are gone, yet perchance not all; nay; doe not some abide with us still which can witnesse both how much and how often this reformation of the Church hath beene laboured for, from time to time? Let no man then accuse those who in these dayes seeke the reformation of the Church.

In

Indeede ſome are ready to accuſe us as factious, and lovers of novelty, becauſe we deſire the Churches conformitie to her head Chriſt: To whom I ſay as Saint *Bernard* once ſaid; It is not new, it is the corruption of ſuch tongues, to call it new (ſaith hee) the truth is ſo manifeſtly light, that ſuch are not able to ſhadow it; and therfore they do but cavill with it by the name of novelty. But how dare they call it novelcie (ſaith he) it is no new vanity, no it is a matter of old religion, and of perfect godlineſſe founded in Chriſt. *Object.* *Anſ.* *In his booke of a ſolitary life.*

And leſt any man ſhould depend on the diſcipline of former ages too confidently not regarding whether it be according to the Goſpel of Chriſt, yea or no, let them conſider what S. *Paul* writes to the *Galathians*, If we (ſaith he) nay S. *Paul* goes further; If an Angell from Heaven (ſaith hee) preach unto you otherwiſe then that ye have received, let him be accurſed; *Gal.* 1. 8. For doe I preach mans doctrine or Gods, ſaith he: nay he told them moreover, that if he ſhould teach them the doctrine of men; that he was not the ſervant of Chriſt, verſe 10.

Object. It may be ſome will ſay, why do you trouble us now with ſuch things, ſeeing the Church hath continued peaceably ſo many yeares under this happie forme; where hath this age ſo much wiſedome above former ages?

Anſ. I might here anſwer, either by reaſon of that experience which we have had above former ages: who were then newly reduced out of Popery; or by reaſon of thoſe weedes which we ſee ſince ſprung up amongſt Gods corne in theſe Churches as well as others; or many other reaſons which I might alleadge, but rather chuſe at this time to anſwer this objection in a word with Saint *Auſtin*, that the counſell of God that ſent it is unſearchable to the wiſedome of man. *In his 10. booke of his Trinitie.*

II. To prove that the Church of *England*, though it be reformed from Popery and Idolatry, and ſetled according

cording to the purest forme; which at her reformation it could attaine unto; yet nevertheleſſe ſince ſuch her ſettlement, time hath produced by experience many inconveniences upon good grownd; wherein it may, and ought to bee againe reformed: which I will prove in three ſeverall circumſtances.

I. Becauſe the Church of *England*, ſaw not many inconveniences in her firſt reformation from Popery, which we now finde in theſe after times.

II. Becauſe there are many things in that forme, which was then eſtabliſhed; which can now bee proved upon good grounds to ſtand in neede of reformation.

III. Becauſe ſuch inconveniences as are found to bee in the Church, are of greateſt conſequence to bee looked after, and ought chiefely to be reformed.

Firſt, to prove that the Church of *England* did not ſee many inconveniences in her firſt reformation from Popery, which we now finde in theſe after times; elſe how comes that governement then ſetled, to bee ſo much excepted againſt; how come mens conſciencies now to be bound to obſervance of ſuch Ceremonies, which they never intended: though as a thing indifferent they permitted ſuch things, as thoſe ſeverall geſtures of the body, at the receiving of the Sacrament, at the reading of the Goſpel before the Altar, at the name Jeſus, &c. the Croſſe in Baptiſme, & in the hornebook, the Prieſts garments, &c. thoſe holy men ſaw not the inconveniences of permitting them; but now the Church cryes out under ſuch ſuperſtition: they ſaw not theſe inconveniences of Lordly Paſtors, which wee now finde: they ſaw not thoſe reliques of the Popiſh Maſſe which is in theſe times diſcovered; they paſſe over theſe and many things more in the Church, which we now ſee the ſuperſtition and inconvenience of, and therefore deſire reformation.

Let us but conſider how full of droſſe and traſh Popery is, though Popery be a profeſſion of Chriſt, yet that Reli-

Religion is full of droſſe, full of weedes, it is like a garden over-runne with weedes: fuller of ceremonies then ſubſtance, nothing but ſhadowes, and ſuperſtition, and vanitie.

Is it poſſible that pure gold ſhould bee refined cleare from the droſſe at one heate; Is it poſſible that all the weedes ſhould be rooted out of a garden at once ſo cleane, that no reliques of them ſhould revive againe, no, the gold muſt come to the fire againe, and againe, ſeven times; before it be pure gold; the garden muſt bee often weeded, before the weedes be utterly rooted out.

The forme of the Church being newly refined from Popery, in thoſe dayes, it is very probable that there will be much droſſe of Popery left behind; all the weedes of Popery cannot be utterly rooted out at one bout; no no; in the name of God bring it to the purifying fire; I meane the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, and there purifie it againe and againe, and leave no droſſe at all behind; roote out the ſtinking weedes of Popery againe, and againe; weede them out upon your knees, weede them out with your hands, with your hearts, &c. neuer leave till they be all weeded out of our Churches, that ſo the *Engliſh* Proteſtant Church may become a glorious Church of Chriſt.

In thoſe dayes holy men were rejoyced to ſee the grounds of Popery caſt out of our Churches, and the Proteſtant diſcipline eſtabliſhed, repugnant to the Church of Rome which was then eſtabliſhed, as time and opportunitie would permit them: but we in theſe times, upon more mature deliberation and longer time of experience, may reforme what their ſo ſodaine change could not foreſee, or accompliſh.

Let us receive the diſcipline of thoſe times as praiſeworthy, but withall; let us conſider that ſaying of Saint *Auſtin*, we receive not (ſaith hee) the diſputation of any men, bee they never ſo catholicke, or praiſe worthy, as *In his 198 Epiſt. unto Fortunatus.*

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we receive the Canonicall Scriptures, though they be holy men, yet (saith he) we may well reproove such things in their writings, wherein wee finde that they have otherwise thought then the truth may beare them: such am I (saith hee) in the writings of others: and such would I wish others to bee in the writings of mine. And Saint *Paul* saith to the Church at *Corinth*, I have planted (saith he) *Apollos* watereth, but God giveth the increase; so then neither is hee that planteth any thing, nor hee that watereth, but God that gives the increase, 1 *Cor.* 3. 6, 7.

2 Reasons

There are two great reasons, why at the first reformation they could not see; nor establish the forme of the Church discipline, in that puritie, which we by the grace of God may in these times. First in respect of those times of darkenesse. Secondly, in respect of those times of trouble and feare: And first in respect of those times of darkenesse.

Should Rome, or any Popish Nation or Church when Popery is setled, be reformed, and become a Protestant Church, could it bee expected that such pure discipline should bee there established in each particular forme in such a Church at the first, as in after times upon more experience, being better practised; and receiving more light from other reformed Churches also? can all inconveniencies bee reformed before a long time; yea, and often reformation too; have not the Apostles, hath not Christ; yea hath not God himselfe, beene often troubled in the conversion of a people in this kinde? And what are we? Wee by the grace of God have so long enjoyed the peace of the Gospel, and have beene so many yeares reformed from Popery, and so abide still under our gracious King, whom God grant long to raigne amongst us; and wee have a forme of Church discipline established since the reformation from Popery; but is this all? oh, there is (by the grace of God) a greater measure of light and knowledge of Jesus Christ, wee are a more

growne

growne Church: to whom the Lord hath revealed a greater measure of understanding by reason of our longer time of experience in the Doctrine of the Gospel, then was at the first reformation. So that we may say as *Erasmus* said upon another occasion; that what was once received in part, may now be growne and encreased, the puritie of Religion is like fruit, it groweth to eternall life, *Rom.* 6. 22. *On Math. 11. Chap.*

Secondly, In respect of those times of trouble and feare: Let us but a little looke upon our selves, in our owne present state: oh, how many, and how great are those troubles, and feares, which our age hath seene to bring to passe this happie opportunity of reformation, we Protestants under the government of our Church, and our King, whose Royall will it is, that all abuses and inconveniences should be reformed, and the Church setled according to the discipline of former ages, in the purest times: yet what by the tyranny of the Prelates, and the close clouded wales of other favorites of superstition; his Majesties Royall will hath not hitherto beene fulfilled: In these troubles of seeking reformation, many have suffered, and beene imprisoned, where some have laid downe their lives, and there ended their dayes. Indeede these things should not be so; oh that there were every where in our Churches, and Kingdome, one heart truely zealous towards God, and faithfull towards our Royall King and Kingdome.

If then it be so troublesome in these dayes, wherein wee live, to bring to passe the reformation of those evills and inconveniences in the Church, which our age findes out; and that it is notwithstanding his Majesties Royall will, that such reformation should bee, according to the discipline of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; How could it chuse then but that greater troubles, and feares, were a hindrance to that reformation which was immediate from popery. It is no wonder though wee now

now discover many inconveniences and evills which they then passed by.

Upon what ground therefore is that saying of many amongst us, that the forme of the discipline of the Church of *England* now stands, as it was setled by holy, wise, and learned men; and therefore it ought not to bee altered whereas you see, that for many causes they were forced to let passe many evills and inconveniences, which they could not then reforme.

In his probeme of his 3 booke of Trinity.

Therefore I say of them, as Saint *Austin* said of himselfe, be not bound unto my writings (saith he) as unto the Canonicall Scriptures, but when thou shalt finde any thing in the Scriptures, which thou diddest not beleeve, beleeve it without doubting or delay; but when thou findest that in my writings which thou diddest not know certainely before, except that thou shalt certainely understand it to be according to the Scriptures, doe not stiffely affirme it.

We ought not to bee bound to the forme of those holy men further, then they agree with the Discipline of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; therfore saith Saint *Paul* to the Church at *Corinth*, let no man (saith he) rejoyce in men, 2 *Cor.* 3. 21.

II. To prove that there are many things in that forme which was then established, which can now bee proved (upon good grounds) to stand in neede of reformation.

Is there not great want of reformation in the Church, as it now stands in that forme; wherein our Lordly Bishops who are lifted up in honour above their brethren cry out, away with all Puritan Preachers, let them be silenced, let them bee suspended if they will not bow, &c. And in the meane while those faithfull Preachers, and Ministers of Gods word, avouch such Lordly Prelacie to be unlawfull, and such superstition as they appoint to be Idolatry.

The Prelates cry for more superstitious Ceremonies

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to be brought into the Church, and labour by their power to force them in, and to binde mens consciences to the observance of them: and in the meane while the faithfull, painefull Ministers of God, both pray and labour for the suppressing of those superstitions which are already crept in. The Prelates will have the Church to bee ruled by them; The faithfull in the Church, will bee ruled by the Scriptures; and under God by our Royall King: and not by the Prelates wherein they abuse both the Doctrine of Christ, and the honour of the King.

The Prelates say they are the true Vickers of Christ in the Church of God; But the Church saith with Saint *Chrysostome*, we beleeve them not: Their discipline is no worthey, or sufficient knowledge of the Godhead. And afterwards expresseth, that out of the very true Churches come forth (oft times) disceivers Therefore wee may not beleeve them, unlesse they speake, & doe such things, as are agreeable to the Scriptures. *In the unperfect worke. Hom. 49.*

The Prelates can pleade their Prelasie from our forefathers, whom we respect as such men as were holy; and did many things well, which we now finde the comfort of; yet let us not esteeme their doings above the holy Scriptures; for the Scriptures are given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, and to instruct in righteousnesse, 2 *Tim.* 2. 16.

Let us take a little view upon the forme of our Church discipline as it stands; how it agrees with our peace; and we shal finde, that it stands in great neede of reformation. 1. In respect of private miseries. 2. In respect of publique dangers.

First in respect of private miseries. How have the faithfull Ministers of God beene straitned, and have had their mouthes, as it were lockt up; who have had so many private snares laide for them, that some have beene faine to flie into other lands, others have suffered in this land, imprisoned, dismembred, &c. and many have beene

constrained to be silent in the congregation, in what they have earnestly prayed in their owne closets; and for feare of such as waighted purposely to ensnare them.

Virgil in his 6 book and 13. Chap. of invention of things.

Might not they complaine (with *Polidorus*) that the world is come to such outrage and meere madnesse herein, that this part of holinesse differeth (in some men) very little from open wickednesse for many good men have suffered, and the whole Church hath beene oppressed because they would not heare the words of them that taught lies. *Ier.* 23. 16.

Secondly, In respect of publique miseries. Is not the whole kingdome sensible of those publique calamities, proceeding from the same; And those eminent dangers which the same hath brought upon us, by reason of those inconveniences which have risen from the forme therof, how many are there amongst us very sensible hereof; And that not onely by the Prelates Courts, which have beene such an universall purgatory to the Church: but those warres, and frights, which have beene by their meanes raised to the disturbance of the whole land, and the impoverishing not onely of the North, but generally of all trading through the whole kingdome.

Nay have they not beene so politique herein, that the hearts of all people have beene so discomfited, that betwixt hope and feare, they have beene ready to prophesie, the returne of Popery: But blessed be the Lord, who hath hitherto preserved our gratious King, and Kingdome. And how doth the Church now rejoyce, since it hath pleased our Royall King to prevent their designes, in calling and confirming of the High, and Honorable, Wise, and Godly Assembly in the high court of Parliament.

Thirdly, to prove that such inconveniences, as are found to be in the Church, are of greatest consequence, to be looked after, and ought chiefely to bee looked to. A godly kingdome is an happie kingdome, but nothing what

whatſoever more ruinates a Church, State, or Kingdome then ſinne. And the reformation of the evills and inconveniences in Church diſcipline, is a great fence againſt ſinne; but the permiſſion of errour is a dangerous downfall, and a great dungeon; and as Saint *Chriſoſtome* ſaith, brings the loſſe of ſalvation, it brings in hereſies, and vicious life, and turnes all things up ſide downe; And this is condemnation (ſaith Chriſt) that light is come into the world, and men loved darkeneſſe more then light, *John* 3.19. *In hit 3. Sermon fo Lazarus.*

Object. If any one ſhall yet object and ſay, where ſhall we looke for a forme of Church diſcipline, ſince even at this time Chriſt is taught to us now as clearely, and truely, as ever in former ages.

Anſw. I ſay with the judgement of Saint *Auſtin*, that wee ought rather to ſeeke the Church in the words of Chriſt, then in the words of men, for that Chriſt is the truth, and better knoweth his owne body. And Chriſt himſelfe gives us the ſame rule alſo. Search the Scriptures (ſaith he) for in them ye thinke to have eternall life, and they are they which teſtifie of me, *Iohn* 5.34. *In hit 3. chap. of the vnity of the Church.*

Thus have I beene briefe in the generall expreſſion of the Churches purity, concluding this part with prayer to Almighty God; that ſuch things as ſtand not with his glory, the Kings honour, the building up of the Church, and the peace and the tranquillity of the Kingdome may be Reformed.

FINIS.